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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 06/26/06

INDEX:

- (1) Yomiuri Internet poll on LDP presidential election; Over 70% of respondents want to see race Abe and Fukuda; Pollees feel reform-oriented stance from Abe, a sense of stability from Fukuda
- (2) Online research on resumption of US beef imports: Many Japanese consumers harbor strong distrust of US beef
- (3) Post-Koizumi diplomatic strategy after end of honeymoon-like Japan-US relations (Part 1): Criticism of Japan blindly following US remains inerasable
- (4) USFJ realignment: Gov't seeking to persuade Okinawa
- (5) US force realignment: Mainland Japan turning into "another Okinawa"
- (6) Poll on Prime Minister Koizumi's structural reforms, social divide

ARTICLES:

- (1) Yomiuri Internet poll on LDP presidential election; Over 70% of respondents want to see race Abe and Fukuda; Pollees feel reform-oriented stance from Abe, a sense of stability from Fukuda

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)
June 25, 2006

The first online poll on contenders to succeed Prime Minister Koizumi conducted by the Yomiuri Shimbun found that pollees have major expectations of a race between Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe and former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda. The survey results also showed that many respondents felt a reform-oriented stance from Abe and a sense of stability from Fukuda. The survey also found that those who like watching TV tended to favor Abe.

Face-off between Abe and Fukuda

The poll asked pollees to choose one of five Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members whom they think is most appropriate as the next prime minister. Abe ranked first with 44%, followed by Fukuda with 26%, Foreign Minister Taro Aso with 5% and Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki with 4%. Regarding a possible face-off between Abe and Fukuda in the LDP presidential race, both from the Mori faction, 75% replied, "Hope to see it," and 24% replied, "Do not hope to see it." Among those who support Abe, who is certain to run in the LDP presidential race, 64% replied, "Have expectations of him," while 33% said, "Do not have expectations of him." On the other hand, among those who are in favor of Fukuda, who has yet to declare his candidacy, 80% "Expect him to run," clearly showing their hope Fukuda will run in the election.

TV and potential successors to Koizumi

How does TV affect potential successors to Koizumi? The survey classified pollees by the amount of TV they watch, using one-hour increments. The rate of those who support Abe stood at less than 30% among those who do not watch TV or do so for less than 30 minutes a day. However, more pollees who watch more TV tend to support Abe. Among those who watch TV more than three hours a day, the rate of those who favor Abe reached 50%.

TOKYO 00003534 002 OF 010

Impressions of potential candidates

The questionnaire included seven questions asking what impression pollees have of the five potential candidates. Abe ranked first in six questions. In particular, Abe was far ahead of the others in terms of having a reform-oriented stance, being friendly, and being a desirable person as a supervisor. Fukuda ranked first in terms of having a sense of stability.

Aso, who gives the strong impression of being open, came in second in terms of being a person with whom pollees want to go out for dinner or a drink.

(2) Online research on resumption of US beef imports: Many Japanese consumers harbor strong distrust of US beef

YOMIURI (Page 6) (Full)
June 26, 2006

The Yomiuri Shimbun and NTT Resonant Communication conducted a joint online survey. The result of the survey highlighted Japanese consumers' harsh views on the safety of US beef. In order to regain the popularity of its beef in Japan, the United States has no choice but to eliminate Japanese consumers' concern about its beef, removing completely risk materials for BSE from the beef to be shipped to Japan.

Majority those who opposing resumption of US beef imports concerned about US inspection system

The governments of Japan and the United States reached a final agreement on June 21 that Japan would resume US beef imports. Japan will thus restart US beef imports for the first time in about six months.

A total of 71% said that they opposed the resumption of US beef or opposed it to a certain extent. More female respondents (76%) expressed opposition to the restart of US beef imports than male respondents (64%).

Asked two reasons for their opposition, 60% said that they had doubts about US safety procedures, while 52% cited their concern about the US inspection system. The figures showed Japanese consumers harbor strong doubts about the US side, since a beef shipment last year included risk materials. Some 30% said that the Japanese government rushed the resumption of beef imports, giving priority to the US.

More than 30% of Japanese consumers prefer Japanese beef

Asked whether there were any changes in their choice of beef after the imports of US beef was suspended, 28% said that they were still eating imported beef the same as before, 9% responded that they ate only domestic beef, and 27% replied they tried to eat Japanese beef. Some 30% preferred Japanese beef.

However, 24% responded that they ate less beef than before, regardless of whether it is domestic or imported, while only 1% said that they did not eat beef at all although they used to. These figures indicate that the suspension of US beef imports had a serious impact on how consumers think.

TOKYO 00003534 003 OF 010

Asked whether they would eat US beef after the resumption of imports, 40% said they would try not to eat it and 20% said they would never eat it, while 6% replied that they had no problem eating US beef.

80% negative about using US beef for gyudon (beef bowl)

Asked whether gyudon chains should use US beef, only 3% said that they should use it, while 10% responded that they should use it as much as possible. Some 47% said that US beef should not be used as much as possible, while 33% said it should not be used.

90% say it should be a requirement to label the country of origin

Asked whether they were worried that restaurants would use US beef, 47% replied, "A little bit," while 39% said, "Concerned about it very much." The government mandates the labeling of the country of origin on some fresh food and processed food, but it does not oblige restaurants to label the country of origin.

Some 67% said that it should be a requirement to label the country of origin on restaurant menus and processed food so that people would be able to recognize whether US beef was used, while 29% said that labeling the country of origin would probably be a good idea.

Excessive elimination a bit too much

US beef imports used to account for about half of all Japan's imports of beef. The Japanese government in December 2003 banned the import of US beef in the wake of discovery of a cow infected with BSE. Last December, Tokyo resumed the imports of US beef from cattle 20 months and younger without any specified risk materials. One month later, however, Japan resuspended imports of US beef after the inclusion of vertebral columns in a beef shipment.

The results of the online survey of consumer monitors reflected the strong anxiety of Japanese consumers about US beef. In order to eliminate this distrust in US beef, the United States must continue effective safety inspections, and it is also absolutely necessary to prevent a recurrence of misconduct. However, it is a bit too much to excessively eliminate US beef. It is important for Japan to create an environment where Japanese consumers will be able to choose beef based on their own judgment, considering taste, price, and safety.

(3) Post-Koizumi diplomatic strategy after end of honeymoon-like Japan-US relations (Part 1): Criticism of Japan blindly following US remains inerasable

MAINIHI (Page 2) (Full)
June 26, 2006

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will leave for the United States to

meet President Bush in Washington on June 29. This will be the first official US visit for Koizumi. The US will give the red-carpet treatment to Koizumi prior to his retirement as prime minister this fall, arranging a dinner party at the White House and other events for him. A government source, though, said: "A visit to the US during the Golden Week holidays in May was discussed, but the prime minister, out of fear that he might be criticized as blindly following the US, declined it and instead visited European Union (EU) countries."

The time for the proposed visit was just before Diet debate on the

TOKYO 00003534 004 OF 010

postal privatization bills, which would determine the fate of the administration. Koizumi has certainly been eager to strengthen relations with the US, but he needed to win public support for the postal bills and did not want to see the proposed visit result in strengthening the image that he has blindly followed the US. Afterward, a plan was floated again for a visit to the US in August or September around the United Nations general assembly in New York, but it also fizzled out due to the dissolution of the House of Representatives. Since Koizumi assumed office, he has met with President Bush several times a year, but a summit was held just once in Kyoto last year.

Prime Minister Koizumi emphatically said in his first meeting with Bush in June 2001: "In promoting Japan-US relations, importance should be placed not on obedience but on cooperation." This remark represented his determination to say what he should say, though he would do his best to strengthen the Japan-US alliance, so as not to be criticized as being at Washington's beck and call. Since then, Koizumi has prepared one message to convey to President Bush for each summit.

In May 2003, when Koizumi was invited to President Bush's private residence in Crawford, Texas, his message was "power and authority." In March 2003, the US and Britain launched an attack on Iraq without obtaining a United Nations resolution allowing the use of armed force. Koizumi had expressed his support just after the military strike began, but in the May summit, Koizumi called on Bush to return to the framework of international cooperation, saying: "It will be impossible to control the world only with power. The authority of the UN is necessary."

Prior to the opening of the war against Iraq, Prime Minister Koizumi, together with British Prime Minister Blair, had continued efforts to persuade President Bush until the last minute to work to win the UN over to his side. In the end, the US agreed to accept a UN resolution calling for unlimited inspections looking for weapons of mass destruction in November 2002. Some attribute Washington's consent to the efforts made by Japan and Britain. A senior Foreign Ministry official stressed: "This proves that the prime minister is not a US lapdog." But his decision to dispatch Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops to Iraq played up Japan's stance of getting close with the US.

No matter how eager the prime minister is to express his frank views to the US, he has actually worked to strengthen the bilateral alliance. In the summit in Crawford, Koizumi and Bush also confirmed the "Japan-US alliance in a global context."

Right before the Bush administration was inaugurated, former Deputy Secretary of State Armitage and others had compiled what is known as

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the "Armitage Report." This report listed the following requests to Japan: (1) Legislation to deal with contingencies; (2) strengthened cooperation between the SDF and the US military, including overseas operations; and (3) cooperation on missile defense (MD). The Koizumi administration swiftly finished this "homework." The report also reiterated the need to "construct an alliance modeled after the one between the US and Britain." Armitage stated to senior Foreign Ministry officials: "The last challenge left to the Koizumi administration is the question of the use of the right to collective self-defense."

Sharing strategies with the US, Britain fought with the US military in such large-scale military operations as the Gulf War and the Iraq

TOKYO 00003534 005 OF 010

War. In order for Japan to become "the Britain of the East," Japanese troops will have to be determined to shed blood with American soldiers on battlefields overseas, setting aside Japan's defense-only policies.

In a speech in Belgium in May, Foreign Minister Taro Aso revealed that Japan would look into international cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO is a military alliance that the US and Canada concluded with Western Europe. Some observers analyze that Aso's remarks imply that Japan aims to become a NATO member with an eye on a revision of the Constitution in the future.

If Japan continues to rely only on the Japan-US alliance, Japan will unavoidably be drawn into US strategies. If this view is taken as a lesson learned from the Koizumi administration's deeds, it might be natural for some to judge it necessary to grope for ways to cooperate with European countries.

Now that Japan and the US are in the best shape ever in the postwar period owing to the close personal ties established between President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi, the joint statement to be issued after the June 29 Japan-US summit will highlight the positive results produced via bilateral relations. Meanwhile, an increasing number of persons have voiced concerns about Japan-US relations being hollowed out now that Armitage and other Japan hands have left the Bush administration. Attention is focused on what diplomatic strategy the next prime minister will come up with after the end of the Koizumi-Bush honeymoon-like relations.

(4) USFJ realignment: Gov't seeking to persuade Okinawa

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Full)
June 23, 2006

Prime Minister Koizumi will attend a memorial service today in the city of Itoman, Okinawa Prefecture, to commemorate the end of the Battle of Okinawa in the closing stages of World War II. In this anniversary event, Koizumi will clarify his intention to carry out the planned realignment of US forces in Japan, including US military bases in Okinawa. In addition, he will promise to alleviate Okinawa's base-hosting burden and help with Okinawa's economic self-sustainability. However, the GOJ and Okinawa prefectural government have yet to enter into consultations over the relocation of Futenma airfield and other local base realignment issues although one month has passed since their exchange of basic standpoints in written form. They have made no headway at all.

On June 7, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Masahiro Futahashi met three assistants to deputy chief cabinet secretaries and senior officials from the Defense Agency, the Foreign Ministry, and the Cabinet Office in his room on the fifth floor of the prime minister's office. They gathered there to talk about how to rectify the present situation in which the government cannot even enter into consultations with Okinawa.

Officials there reported on how things were going in Okinawa Prefecture and its municipalities hosting US military bases. However, they could not hammer out any good ideas. Futahashi stressed the importance of timing for Tokyo to persuade Okinawa over the US military realignment, and he directed them to find a way to open consultations with Okinawa.

The government and Okinawa Prefecture confirmed in their exchange of

TOKYO 00003534 006 OF 010

notes on May 11 that the relocation of Futenma airfield is based on the government's plan to relocate the airfield's heliport functions to a coastal area of Camp Schwab in the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago. In response, the government made a cabinet decision on May 30 to adopt a basic course of action regarding the

realignment of US forces in Japan.

The government has documented its basic course of action, which says the government will set up a consultative body consisting of officials from the government, Okinawa Prefecture, and the prefecture's base-hosting municipalities in order to work out a blueprint for Futenma airfield's alternative and a package of economic incentives for base-hosting communities. However, Okinawa Prefecture opposed the government's stance of regarding its coastal relocation plan as an established course of action. In fact, the government cannot even expect to hold its first consultative meeting with Okinawa and its municipalities over Futenma relocation.

Okinawa Governor Keiichi Inamine has stressed that he will not compromise. "Okinawa has its own position," Inamine said in a speech delivered in Naha on June 21. "We have a long history of consultations in the process of working it out," Inamine added. It seems that the government cannot easily find a breakthrough.

Koizumi will step down in September. Meanwhile, Inamine has also said he will not run in the gubernatorial election set for Nov. 19 this year. Some cite this situation as one of the reasons why there has been no progress in the talks between Tokyo and Okinawa. "It would be difficult to reach a settlement while Prime Minister Koizumi is in office, so he's reluctant to address the matter," one said.

Koizumi himself told reporters at his office yesterday evening that the government has been "tenaciously" talking with Okinawa Prefecture. "We can't do this in a year," Koizumi admitted. "We've now decided on a basic course of action for the future, but it will take many more years (to reach a settlement)," he added.

The Defense Agency will work out a construction plan by October this year for Futenma airfield's replacement facility. After that, the agency will go through procedures for an environmental assessment of the Futenma relocation site. In fiscal 2007, the agency would like to begin pulling down some of the land-based facilities currently on the premises of Camp Schwab. The agency is now getting impatient. Some officials are saying the government should bypass Okinawa Prefecture to work out a construction plan. "We should first detail the plan with the United States," a top-level official of the agency said. "And then," this official added, "it's all right to present the plan to Okinawa Prefecture and Nago City later on."

In Okinawa Prefecture, as well, the local governing coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito is at a loss. "Mr. Inamine's successor cannot suddenly compromise with the government," one local ruling party official said. "But," this official added, "if we let an opposition party candidate win the gubernatorial election, the (Futenma) relocation will be completely up in the air."

The government is expecting its planned package of economic incentives for base-hosting localities to serve as leverage to break the impasse. In the process of realigning US forces in Japan, the government plans to subsidize local base hosts accepting additional US military base functions. The government will pay subsidies to

TOKYO 00003534 007 OF 010

them in stages according to progress in the construction of newly planned facilities. If there is progress in base construction, the government will pay subsidies. However, the government will stop its subsidization of local hosts if construction work is discontinued after encountering local opposition.

The government once planned to build an offshore facility in waters off Nago City's Henoko district to take over Futenma airfield's heliport functions. This offshore relocation plan, however, was derailed. Based on this experience, the government will now introduce such a local subsidization system. "The government is in dire straits," a senior official of the Defense Agency said. This official went on: "If the government only pays money for economic stimulus measures and sees no alternative facility constructed, we can't get the people's understanding."

When the government planned to relocate Futenma airfield to a Henoko offshore site, the government set forth a package of local development measures for all localities in the island prefecture's northern districts. The government started a 10-year local development plan in fiscal 2000. Based on this plan, the government has been still budgeting money for development projects for the northern districts. However, the Henoko offshore relocation plan did not come to pass. The government intends to call off the 10-year development plan in exchange for the establishment of a new subsidization system.

The government's local subsidization used to be limited to infrastructure construction. This time around, however, the government will not limit the purpose of its subsidies for base-hosting localities. The government will allow them to use its subsidies not only for infrastructure construction but also for tourism promotion and welfare, thereby aiming to promote Okinawa's self-sustainability.

Okinawa Prefecture, however, is strongly opposing this idea shown by the government.

On June 12, local heads from 12 municipalities in Okinawa Prefecture's northern districts called at the prime minister's office, where they asked Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe to continue the government's local development projects for their districts as planned. Abe only advised them to make such a request in a meeting of the three-party consultative council of officials from the government, Okinawa Prefecture, and the prefecture's base-hosting municipalities.

On June 22, Okinawa Minister Koike met the press and vowed to address local development measures. "I'd like to close the gap between the government and local communities while understanding Okinawa at present and in the future," she said. However, there is no knowing if she can work it out as expected by the government.

(5) US force realignment: Mainland Japan turning into "another Okinawa"

ASAHI (Page 9) (Abridged)
June 26, 2006

By Yoshibumi Wakamiya, director of the Asahi Shimbun's editorial board

Okinawa Prefecture marked the 61st anniversary of the end of the
TOKYO 00003534 008 OF 010

Battle of Okinawa on June 23. That day, I marched 9 kilometers to the Peace Memorial Park in Itoman along with bereaved families in sweltering heat.

In the closing days of the Pacific War, a fierce battle took place between Japanese and US forces on the island, and 200,000 locals lost their lives in less than three months. On the park stands the Cornerstone of Peace engraved with the names of the war dead, testifying to their indescribable tragedies.

Okinawa's tragedy did not end with the Battle of Okinawa. After the war, the prefecture was placed under US control until it was returned to Japan 34 years ago. Okinawa is still an "island of US bases," hosting 75% of the US military bases in Japan.

On April 12, 1996, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun ran a scoop on a US plan to return Futenma Air Station. Japan and the US had reached the agreement following the gang rape of an Okinawa schoolgirl by three US servicemen in September 1995.

Over 10 years have passed since the agreement was reached between then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and President Bill Clinton to return Futenma Air Station "in five to seven years." The airfield still sits in a residential area. Just two years ago, a US military helicopter crashed onto the campus of Okinawa International University, adjacent to Futenma Air Station.

The plan agreed to between Tokyo and Washington to build an alternative sea-based airfield off Henoko fell through due to strong local opposition. The two governments have reached a new accord to build a ground-based heliport. It remains to be seen whether the new plan will materialize. Okinawa's determination to block any plan to build a new base in the prefecture has not waned.

Both the Okinawa Times and the Ryukyu Shimpo prominently carried articles featuring the Constitution this year. Okinawa has a special passion for the Constitution.

Okinawa longed to return to Japan and its pacifist Constitution, as such events as blatant human rights violations and sorties during the Vietnam War, revealed that Okinawa's reality was the opposite. Days before Okinawa's reversion to Japan, Chief Administrator of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands Chobyō Yara (who later became governor of Okinawa) and Naha Mayor Ryosho Taira urged local people to abide by the spirit of the Constitution in the future. Naha built a peace monument engraved with Article 9 in 1985.

But their wishes never came true. Throughout the postwar period, Japan has kept a delicate balance between its pacifist Constitution and the US-Japan Security Treaty. Okinawa has been forced to bear a security burden instead of abiding by the spirit of the Constitution. Okinawa's sorrow and anger have their roots there. It seems to be the only logical explanation for Okinawa's fierce opposition to US bases, exemplified by the Henoko relocation plan.

Akira Arakawa, a 75-year old maverick commentator, thinks it was just an illusion that Okinawa would be placed under Japan's pacifist Constitution. People on mainland Japan have been able to enjoy the pacifist Constitution and call for the observance of Article 9 owing to the US bases in Okinawa.

An agreement was reached on the realignment of US forces in Japan at a two-plus-two meeting in May of the foreign and defense ministers

TOKYO 00003534 009 OF 010

of Japan and the United States.

As a result, Okinawa-based US Marines will be relocated to Guam apart from Futenma Air Station's relocation, and some US military sites will be returned to Japan. Some of the fighters now deployed at Kadena Air Base will also be split among six Self-Defense Force bases in mainland Japan to conduct joint drills with the SDF. Additionally, US Army 1st Corps headquarters will be shifted to Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture to keep a watchful eye on the region from Asia to the Middle East.

It is good for mainland Japan to share the burden with Okinawa. But the US force realignment plan is designed to enhance the Japan-US alliance once and for all. In other words, force realignment seems to aim at turning mainland Japan into another Okinawa to reinvent the whole country into a military archipelago.

During his upcoming visit to the United States, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reportedly intends to highlight democracy with President George W. Bush as their common value. But the US is still unrepentant about its war with Iraq, and Koizumi diplomacy has not expressed its regret for strained relations with China and other countries. Under such circumstances, is it really good for Japan to be integrated into America's military strategy?

Japan should stop relying on the bases in Okinawa. But do the people on mainland Japan have such awareness and a sense of urgency? Teruo Hiyane, a 66-year-old professor emeritus at the University of the Ryukyus, took this view:

"People on mainland Japan would not put up much resistance. Experiences in war and histories of struggle for the Constitution are completely different between mainland Japan and Okinawa."

Henoko's resistance carries great significance not only for Okinawa but also for all of Japan, according to Hiyane.

(6) Poll on Prime Minister Koizumi's structural reforms, social

divide

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
June 24, 2006

Questions & Answers
(Figures shown in %age.)

Q: What do you think the next prime minister should do about Prime Minister Koizumi's restructuring initiative?

Continue it as is	15.6
Modify it	55.8
No need to continue it	23.0
No answer (N/A)	5.5

Q: Japan's social divide, such as an income gap, is reportedly widening. Do you think this is a serious problem?

Yes	53.3
Yes to a certain degree	24.3
No to a certain degree	11.1
No	9.6
N/A	1.7

TOKYO 00003534 010 OF 010

Q: Do you think anyone who works hard can overcome such disparities in Japan today?

Yes	14.2
Yes to a certain degree	18.3
No to a certain degree	22.6
No	42.7
N/A	2.1

Polling methodology

Date of survey: June 17-18.

Subjects of survey: 3,000 persons chosen from among all eligible voters throughout the country (at 250 locations on a stratified two-stage random sampling basis).

Method of implementation: Door-to-door visits for face-to-face interviews.

Number of valid respondents: 1,815 persons (60.5%).

DONOVAN